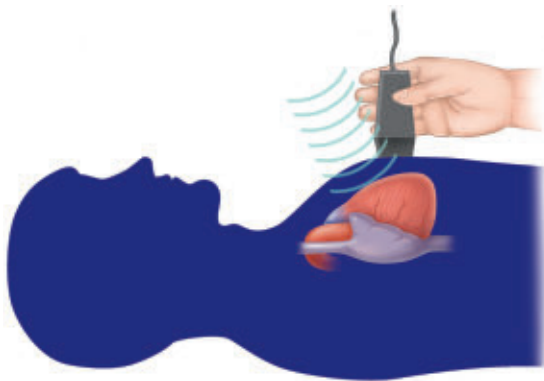


What Is a Transthoracic Echo?

A transthoracic **echocardiogram** (also called an “echo” or TTE) is an imaging test. It uses sound waves (ultrasound) to produce live images of the heart. The images show how well the heart is pumping. They can also show the size and shape of the heart and its structures.

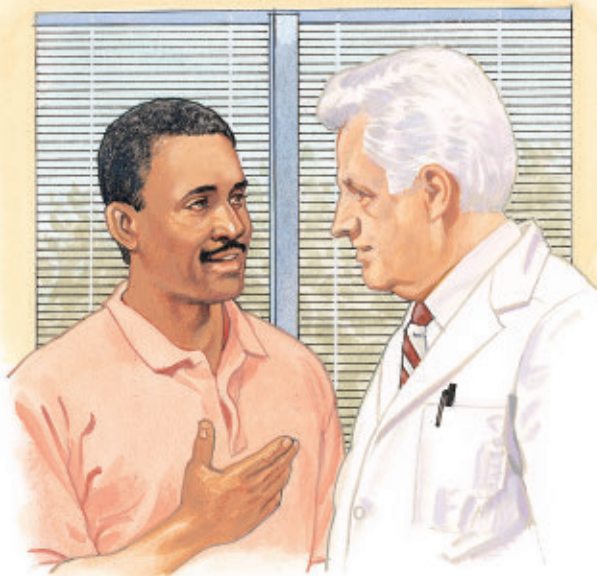
Your doctor may order an echo if a heart problem is suspected. The test is safe and painless. It may be done in a hospital, test center, or doctor's office.



The transducer bounces sound waves off the heart. Because sound waves are high pitched, you won't hear them.

Your Test Results

Your doctor will discuss your test results with you during a phone call or future office visit. The results help you and your doctor plan treatment. If more information about your heart is needed, your doctor may advise further testing.



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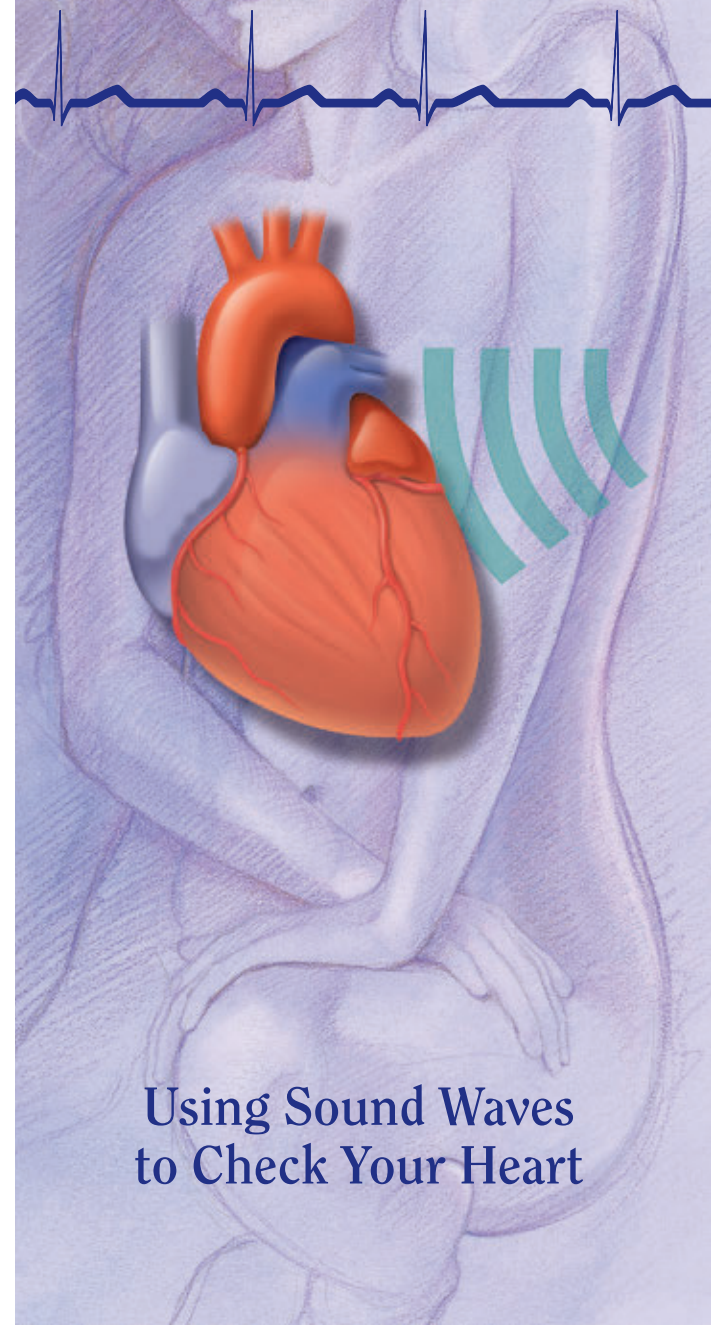
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TRANSTHORACIC ECHO



Using Sound Waves
to Check Your Heart

Before Your Echo

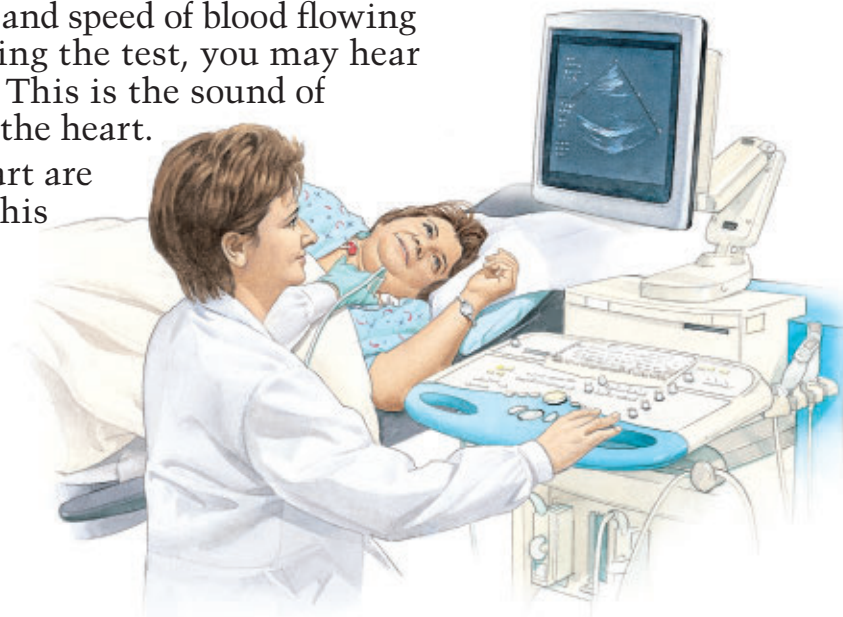
- Discuss any questions or concerns you have with your doctor.
- Mention any over-the-counter or prescription medications, herbal remedies, or supplements that you're taking.
- Allow extra time for checking in.
- Wear a two-piece outfit for the test. You may be asked to remove clothing and jewelry from the waist up. If so, you'll be given a short hospital gown.



You may need to undress from the waist up and put on a short gown.

During Your Echo

- Most echo tests take 30 to 45 minutes.
- Small pads (electrodes) are placed on your chest to monitor your heartbeat.
- Special gel is rubbed onto your chest. A transducer (small device that looks like a microphone) is then moved firmly over the skin area. The transducer creates the sound waves that make images of your heart.
- At times, you may be asked to exhale and hold your breath for a few seconds. Air in your lungs can affect the images.
- The transducer may also be used to do a Doppler study. This test measures the direction and speed of blood flowing through the heart. During the test, you may hear a "whooshing" sound. This is the sound of blood flowing through the heart.
- The images of your heart are stored electronically. This is so your doctor can review them later.



Images of your heart appear on a monitor.

After Your Echo

- The gel is wiped off your chest and the pads are removed.
- You may return to your usual routine unless told otherwise.
- Be sure to keep all follow-up appointments with your doctor as directed.



Most people can return to normal activity as soon as the test is over.